



GILA NEWSLETTER

3RD EDITION

June 8, 2002



SPC Kuxhaus briefs MG Van Winkle on current operations

TF 9E Hosts MG Van Winkle

Its not everyday the Deputy Commander of Engineers stops by to pay your unit a visit. Well, on Monday this is exactly what happened. MG Van Winkle, also the Commander of USACE, spent the better part of a day speaking to soldiers, touring TF 9E's area of operations, and delivering the current news from the Pentagon.

MG Van Winkle shared lunch with about 25 TF 9E soldiers. While making sure he walked around and personally met each soldier, MG Van Winkle answered numerous questions and offered simple, yet sound advice to many inquisitive soldiers. CSM Rather hosted the lunch, which saw soldiers from all five companies attend.

Later, MG Van Winkle took a quick tour of the Gila TOC where he thanked the soldiers for their hard work and dedication. SPC Kuxhaus and SFC Goldner received coins from the general for their particular achievements thus far in the rotation.

Concluding his stay, MG Van Winkle sat down with all the engineer officers stationed within MNB-E. COL Hoffpauir and LTC Idlet hosted

the event with over 50 officers in attendance. This was the first opportunity thus far in the rotation in which engineer officers from across MNB-E were able to gather in the same place. MG Van Winkle again opened the floor to questions and gave each officer a perspective of what the future holds for the Engineers.



MG Van Winkle during Q/A with Engineer Officers

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HHC/9E: Headhunters

The ALOC (S1, S4 and Chaplain) has been focusing on physical training and establishing systems that will get us through the deployment. Even though most of the critical operations in Kosovo are operational missions, the personnel, logistics and morale have more to do with the success of the mission than you would first think.



*SPC Peredo & 26 of his newest friends
at the HHC sponsored grade school*

The S1 section has been updating personnel and financial data to ensure that soldiers get properly paid their entitlements and benefits of being deployed. The S1 has also done a good job at making the leaders and soldiers aware of additional programs that they are eligible for to include accumulation of PERSTEMPO days for stabilization, Combat Zone leave that will increase the time that they can receive tax-free income even after we redeploy. They have also continued to inform TF 9E of the benefits of the Deployment Savings Program and the Thrift Savings Plan in order to help soldiers improve their finances in both the short and long term. SPC Corriea has been processing a large volume of much needed mail since it really helps the soldier's morale. SPC Corriea will no doubt be known as Santa Claus of the battalion as he carries several large gray bags of mail to the soldiers of TF 9E every day of the deployment.

The S4 section has been focusing on the administrative issues of equipment and property that the companies are responsible for. The shop has also been involved in ordering additional materials and equipment that has been requested by companies to support their numerous missions. Since TF 9E was not quite as large as the last unit, we have been allowed to turn in some of the equipment that we cannot fully maintain. Although this sounds like a good thing, it will involve many people working long hours to get the equipment in good shape so that it can be used elsewhere in the world. In addition to the actions associated with a deployment the section has continued to conduct normal operations such as budget tracking, Reports of Surveys and transferring equipment to various units.



*SPC Pena proudly shows the proof of
her hard work in the motor pool*

Chaplain Blount and PFC Ruffin have been doing a lot of traveling since MNB (E) covers a large area in which TF 9E and B/9E have been operating. There are numerous camps, project sites and training areas where soldiers from TF 9E are conducting operations, construction and training every day. Chaplain Blount being a "muddy boot" (leader that is in the field with the troops vs. an office leader) leader makes it a point to visit the troops wherever they are. In addition, the Chaplain has been either leading or participating in numerous services, prayer services, bible studies or praise groups. Chaplain Blount continues to be an inspiration to us all with his upbeat personality and concern for the troops.





A/9E: Breach Hell !!

Alpha Company completed a few more missions and began guard duty this past week. In 1st Platoon, 2LT Dunker, SSG Crow, SSG Labrador, SPC Castaneda, and SPC Seawright completed the Route Lion bypass recon. This recon helped leaders at battalion and division level make important decisions. On Saturday, they began force protection duty to include tower guard, gate guard, bus escort, and chase escort. 1st Platoon received a new soldier this week, PV2 Martin, from Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

In 2nd Platoon, CPL Rowker was promoted to SGT. LTC Idlet and CSM Rather presented the promotion on June 1st. SGT Rowker is a member of SSG Grayson's 3rd squad.



SGT Rowker receives promotion on June 1st

3rd Platoon began support of Camp Bondsteel force protection on the morning of the 1st. Throughout the week the sappers and NCO's rotated between gate and tower guard duties. In the Sunday cover article on the NATO KFOR website, www.nato.int/kfor/welcome.html, SPC Doran received recognition for his role in the clearing of a mudslide on Route BRASS. Over the coming weeks, SPC Robinson will begin opportunity training with A/94th Engineers in order to further increase his 62J skills using their horizontal construction equipment.



Specialist Duane Doran of Alpha 9E clears fallen dirt from a portion of road north of Vrobovac to allow movement along the road for the local residents



B/9E: Outlaws

This week the Outlaws welcomed back SPC Adams from the brief leave to enjoy his families new baby. He came back just in time because we had to sadly say goodbye to 3 outstanding Outlaw Soldiers: SSG Villanueva, SPC Yates and SPC Walterscheid. SPC Walterscheid showed some hidden talents at Karaoke on his way out. That is probably the only thing that we will not miss! As they were leaving, we continued to perform new missions. On Thursday, 1st and 2nd platoons escorted Chaplain Gregory on a city tour. The chaplain is now going to join our soldiers weekly. It must be the Outlaw charisma. We also had the opportunity to apprehend another man suspected of hindering the safe and secure environment of Kosovo. SGT Phinn's squad did an unbelievable job in treating the man with dignity and respect as we awaited the transportation to the Camp Bondsteel Detention Facility. He knew that he was dealing with a professional group of soldiers. I had the opportunity to be on the radio for an hour, and I suppose that more people listened to SPC Walterscheid's singing than to my radio show, but it was a good experience. We completed our week by escorting BG Combest through Gnjilane. He gave SGT Bosomworth's entire patrol coins for their professionalism. Just another week in Outlaw Land.

God bless,
CPT Bill Lash



Bravo 9E patrol in Gnjilane(from left): SPC Matthew, SPC Taylor, PFC Cardona, SSG Villanueva, interpreter



Bravo 9E patrol on 6 June (from left): PFC Jacobs, PAO soldier, SPC St. Clair, interpreter, SGT Bosomworth





C/9E: Dawgs of War

The Dawgs of War assumed the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) mission this past week and have performed exceptionally well. This mission is a Platoon mission, and A&O Platoon volunteered



to fulfill this requirement for the Company's first two-week rotation. They were notified on several occasions for potential missions, but have not actually executed any real world missions to date. They have fully impressed me with their quick response time and thorough preparations during these anti-climatic notices.

1ST Platoon has spent the last week fulfilling the role of "Mission Platoon" for the Battalion: they handle last minute taskings and support Battalion and Company operations. This mission has kept them extremely busy training for potential scenarios and executing the numerous taskings from the battalion. 1ST Platoon has conducted several escort missions throughout the week. SGT Freeman and SPC Trost have had the specific mission of performing a daily reconnaissance of an ongoing construction project.

2ND Platoon is in training cycle and has executed training on many of the tasks expected of the QRF platoon. All three platoons have also executed training with 2-1 Aviation and have become proficient at loading and unloading the helicopters. The best training this week for the company was the MEDEVAC training. The platoons traveled out to a nearby helicopter landing pad, prepared the area for air evacuation of a casualty, called in a training scenario, trained on treating a casualty, and then loaded patients onto the Helicopter. The soldiers then flew around for about five minutes before being returned to the training site. This process was repeated several times until all soldiers were



comfortable with the procedure. SPC Tucker was commended by the pilots for his quality radio communications. The whole Company performed exceptionally well.

SPC Brekke reenlisted this week, making the company proud of his dedication to continued service to the Army.

Dawg 6

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A/94E: Warriors

A/94th Warriors are at it again! This past week, the horizontal section successfully deployed out to Falcon 12, Falcon 5, and Falcon 9 ranges to perform range upgrades. After a slow start due to our continued maintenance focus, the horizontal section received their first project to test out their equipment and gain some construction experience in sector. This project consisted of building up berms and drainage installation, which utilized an array of equipment, including D7 Dozers and 130G Graders. Led by SSG Andrew Kenny and SGT Daniel Chase, a crew of six soldiers performed the range construction, while shuttling equipment back and forth between the ranges and Camp Bondsteel. This mission was an overwhelming success, as it was completed safely and will benefit the units of MNB(E) throughout the current deployment.



SPC Gulseth operates the D7 Dozer at Range Falcon 12

Consecutively, the horizontal section will prepare for their upcoming Route Lion bypass mission. As the top construction priority for the 9th Engineer Battalion, this mission will benefit both the soldiers of KFOR and the citizens of Kosovo. Route Lion is a major Main Supply Route (MSR), which connects the two sectors, MNB(E) to the MNB(S). Due to a failing road structure along Route Lion, the horizontal section will expand a current route bypass in order to allow traffic to proceed while the actual route is closed off and repaired. This project will further test the horizontal sections construction ability, as well as serve as an excellent training exercise with real world implications.

Not to be outdone, the vertical section will take their past success at Camp McGrath and carry that over into a decking project at Fire Base Rock. Utilizing connections made during their Camp McGrath Stairs project, SSG Taitague and squad will deploy back out to Camp McGrath. There they will stay for the next 12 days as they complete the Fire Base Rock Project. This decking project will serve as an excellent follow on mission to the Stairs Project because it allows the soldiers to expand upon their woodworking proficiency.



SGT Cannon (left) briefs BG Lute & LTC Idlet on A/94th Operations!

Also performing above standard and leading the way is the A/94th Headquarters Section. SGT Eric Cannon, the Operations Sergeant, and SGT Chris Dean, the Training NCO, have kept A/94th operations running smoothly over the past month. Their ability to track convoys, construction projects, and run the day-to-day operations of A/94th have made these NCOs invaluable assets to the success of Alpha Company. As quoted from SGT Cannon, they are “keeping it operational.”





737th EOD

A very busy week for Aftershock 737, along with conducting 12 incidents in sector we also had 3 promotions. On the 1st of June MSG Lott, SSG Hood and SSG Williams were promoted. BG Lute and 1SG Pollygus promoted MSG Lott. LTC Idlet and MSG Lott promoted SSG Hood and SSG Williams. This was a very joyous day for these soldiers and the 737th. The Operational tempo continues to steady and 737th EOD continues to lean forward in the foxhole.



LTC Idlet and SSG Hood



LTC Idlet and SSG Williams



BG Lute and 1SG Pollygus promote MSG Lott



Scenes from KFOR 4A



SSG Garcia and SFC Martinez discussing the finer things about paperwork



1LT Duracinsky hard at work



The TF 9E XO, MAJ Mirage, listens to MG Van Winkle



"What to Reenlist?" (SSG Vasquez)

Editor in Chief
The Gila Adjutant

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